

Monday, February 12, 2007

**Border Patrol Agents:** Many of you have written or called my office about what actions are being taken in Congress to secure the pardon or relocation of the two border patrol agents, Ignacio Ramos and Jose Alonso Compean. They were convicted last year and sentenced to 11 and 12 years in jail for acts they committed while shooting a drug smuggling illegal alien. This case has become symbolic of our twisted immigration enforcement system, which allows thousands of illegal alien felons to roam our streets and millions of other aliens to be here illegally while enforcement agents have the proverbial book thrown at them for "violations of policy" while trying to apprehend one of those felons. Pardons are being sought, but at the very least the sentence received is way out of proportion to any crime committed. Here is a list of the actions I have been taking to help resolve this miscarriage of justice:

- September 14, 2006 – Along with 22 colleagues, I sent a letter to Attorney General Alberto Gonzales requesting that he investigate the questionable tactics used to prosecute Agents Ramos and Compean.
- December 1, 2006 – Along with 15 colleagues, I sent a letter to then Judiciary Committee Chairman F. James Sensenbrenner to request that he hold hearings on the matter.
- December 6, 2006 – Along with 50 colleagues, I sent a letter to President Bush asking that he immediately pardon Agents Ramos and Compean.
- January 8, 2007 – Along with 38 colleagues, I sent another letter to Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, this time requesting his agency not oppose a motion to prevent the agents from having to report to prison.
- January 10, 2007 – Along with 30 colleagues, I sent another letter to President Bush to reiterate the need to expedite the pardon process in light of the dangers both agents are facing in prison.

In addition, I have cosponsored a bill introduced by Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.) that would allow Congress to directly vote on whether the agents should be pardoned. This has never been done before, and there is some constitutional ambiguity as to whether Congress has the right to take such an action. But, I believe this is a worthy test case. I hope the new Democratic leadership will let it go to the floor for a vote.

**War Resolutions:** Last week, I told you how I thought that "non-binding" resolutions on the wars are not nearly as important as the substantive actions already underway. The unanimous Senate confirmation of a new commander of U.S. forces in Iraq and the upcoming allocation of the \$100 billion funding request for the war carry much more weight. But, that doesn't stop

these resolutions from being offered and debated.

At the time of this writing, it looks like we will spend this entire week debating the Democratic leadership's resolution to oppose the reinforcements in Iraq but without calling for any withdrawal of existing troops. In effect, they are calling for "staying the course" since they call for neither an increase nor a decrease in troops, or any change in strategy. Interesting huh? Also, it appears that Pelosi's leadership will not allow any other resolutions to be voted upon except hers. That means that a "withdraw troops now" resolution that some Democrats want to offer will not be permitted, nor will a Republican proposal by former Vietnam POW Sam Johnson (R-TX) to call for fully funding whatever troops are there.

I get lots of comments from many of you on this issue. Lest any of you readers think there is unanimity on Iraq, I have gotten comments from "pull out right now" to "John, you need to be more supportive of the troop surge and the commitment to do what it takes to win" and everything in between. This situation is so complex, and so consequential that no slogans on either side are appropriate but thoughtful discourse is. For those of you in the "pull out right now group," it is interesting to note that even the Democrat leadership is rejecting that option this week.

**Pelosi One:** After the attacks of September 11, 2001, it was decided that the Speaker of the House, being third in line for the Presidency, should not fly commercial airlines for security reasons. So, Speaker Hastert was provided with a twelve passenger business jet operated by the Air Force (like a small version of Air Force One) to travel when on official business. You have no doubt heard that new Speaker Pelosi has asked for a much, much larger Boeing 757. This has created quite a stir here in Washington which has led to the new plane being called either "Pelosi One" or "the plane to anywhere." Speaker Pelosi testified this week on the dangers of global warming which led to the charge that it's okay for her to fly in a really big jet but not for a mother with four kids to drive an SUV. Congressman Murtha (D-PA), Chairman of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee, said he would "tell them [the pentagon] what they need to do" relative to fulfilling the Speaker's request. This led to a retort by Congressman Cole (R-OK) who said "It is irresponsible and reckless for Congressman Murtha to use funding needed for the protection of our country and for our men and women in uniform as leverage in order for Nancy Pelosi to travel from coast to coast like a movie star."

For her part, Speaker Pelosi said "...as the first woman speaker, I have no intention of having less respect for the office I hold than all of the other speakers that have come before me." Let's see. All other speakers before her had either no jet or a small twelve passenger one. Am I missing the discrimination here?

Until next week,

I remain respectfully,

Congressman John Campbell